

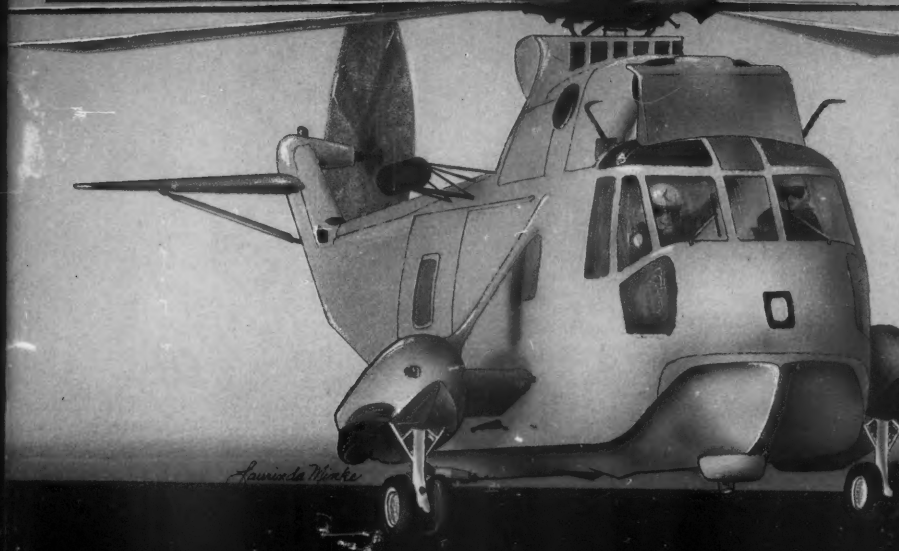
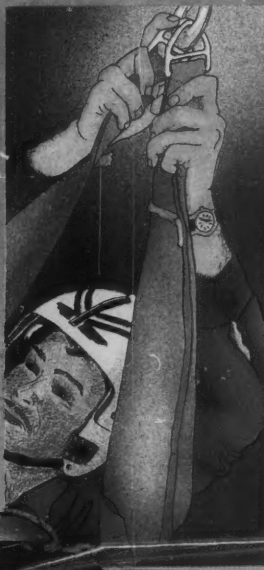
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March 1990



approach

The Naval Aviation Safety Review



Editorial



"Hey, Mister Jet-Ridin' Editor! How 'bout some helo coverage? The helicopter community has safety concerns too, or haven't you read your message board lately?" The four analysts approached, each wielding a different theme issue. Tailhook, Ejection, ACM and Aeromedical issues were rolled up like crude night sticks which they tapped against their thighs while circling me. As I looked in their eyes, I could see these were no longer the same men I had playfully called "Rotorheads" just days before. "Well? What's it gonna be?"

I was trapped. It was time for some mental gymnastics. Let's see . . . in 1989 there were 14 Navy/Marine Class A Helicopter mishaps resulting in 51 fatalities, compared to 25 Navy/Marine Class A TacAir mishaps resulting in 11 fatalities. The Naval Safety Center measures results, not in dollars, but in lives saved. Ah-ha! "A 'Helo Ops' theme issue?"

"Good answer, beanbag."



Wendy Cull

approach

Vol. 35 No. 9/March 1990

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FEATURES

Stallion in the Cage 2
By LCdr. Bruce A. Service. The helo gets "boxed in" during a proficiency hop.

Good Winds, Bad Winds 6
By LCdr. John T. Bader. Don't accept the tower's winds if they're not right.

When the Giant Fan Stops, or Spasmodic Shudders at 10,000 Feet 8
By Lt. M.K. Tribbie. In-flight refueling, hypoxia and weather almost claim this helicopter and its crew.

Dome de Dome Dome! 10
By Ltjg. Joseph S. Palermo. An oil leak in flight cause some anxious moments for this H-3 crew.

A Det OINC's Nightmare 12
By LCdr. A. Russ MacConnell. With one det helo undergoing maintenance on deck, the aircraft in the air can't find a place to land.

The Best Pilot in the Squadron 14
By LCdr. Lawrence Downs, Jr. Then, why is he dead?

A Matter of Trust 16
By Ltjg. Royce Dreyer. Don't let someone try to take you with them.

On the cover:
Navy and Marine helicopters in action.
Art by staff artist Laurinda Minke

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see page 2



see page 16



see page 29

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY

APR 13 1990

DEPARTMENTS

Preflight . . . Again 18
By Lt. W. Michael Tooker. An open engine cowl in flight spells trouble for this H-2 crew.

The "Brakes" of Naval Air 21
By LCdr. Brian J. McCormack. A locked brake nearly pitches this H-3 over in the fuel pits.

Six Inches From Being Heroes 24
By Capt. Philip Cain, USMC. This new CH-46 HAC's first emergency.

My Mercy Mission 26
By LCdr. L.A. Wallis. A rescue flight for an injured shipmate.

Brief the Crew Chief 29
By 1stLt. T.J. Dolan, USMC. He's more than a passenger, much more.

This One'll Kill You! But Seriously . . . 30
By LCdr. Pat McGrath. If he had listened to the brief, the flight would have gone as planned.

Helos Never Bingo. 32
By Lt. Randy Johnson. A great motto, but not very realistic.

DEPARTMENTS

Bravo Zulu 22
Brownshoes in Action Comix IBC

Capt. L.F. Norton, Commander, Naval Safety Center
Col. John P. Oppenhuizen, Deputy Commander
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By LCdr. Bruce E. Service

Stallion in

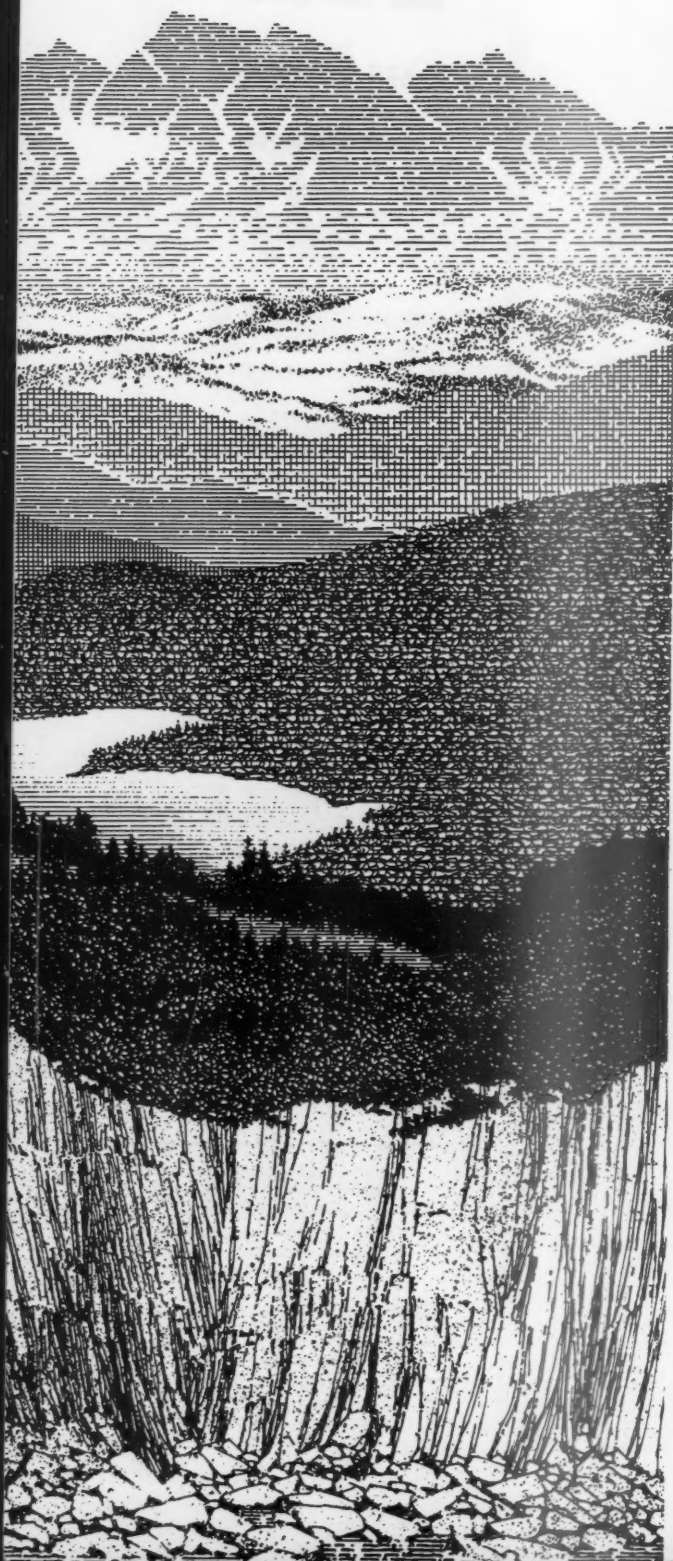
FLIGHT time was scarce, so even a routine proficiency hop was welcome. We had recently returned from a WESTPAC unit rotation deployment where we had suffered a Class "A" mishap only six weeks before. We had spent a lot of time discussing the mishap. I found myself briefing in more detail and assigning specific responsibilities for each crew member in as many scenarios as I could imagine. One area we discussed concerned the duties of the pilot not at the controls during takeoffs and landings.

During a typical brief, I'd say, "On takeoff and landing, the non-flying pilot should keep his hands on the engine speed-control levers. If we have an engine malfunction, or our rotor rpm starts drooping for any reason, I want you to bring those babies up. I'll do the same for you."

My copilot, while experienced, had had trouble convincing the chain of command that he was ready to become an aircraft commander. He had the hours and met the NATOPS requirements, but the chain did not think he possessed the necessary judgment for the designation. This lack of confidence resulted in selective scheduling, and I drew the straw that day. We had flown together several times and got along well enough.

We read the book and were ready for the hop. We saw that our aircraft had flown a check flight a few days before and that the No. 2 engine was a little weaker than No. 1, but it was within limits. We met our crew chief, a squared-away sergeant with an excellent reputation within the command. We preflighted and launched.

We decided we would begin the hop with confined zone landings. Our standard departure spit us out directly into the area.



the Canyon

We took turns making landings to LZ "Large," then made approaches to a smaller area just below it. While we were satisfied with our performance, we decided to up the ante and fly up the canyon to another popular, well-used LZ. This LZ was located on a narrow finger in the canyon and required more finesse in our landing technique.

I took control and flew the first approach. Through the 90-degree position, I saw we were high and fast.

"I think we'll wave this one off," I said into the ICS.



approach/march 1990

The salty crew chief laughed and keyed his mike. "What's the matter, Captain, a little rusty?"

"I'll give you rusty," I answered good-naturedly. "Let me try that again." We went around for another try. This approach looked better, and we arrived on final right on profile. I pulled in collective to massage our closure rate.

Suddenly, there was a bang, and our Sea Stallion shuddered.

"We're drooping!" I hollered, "but we're going to make it." I wish I had felt as confident as I sounded.

We closed with the LZ, and I froze the collective, pushing the nose over in an attempt to wave off. Any reduction in the collective at this point to regain Nr would have placed us firmly into the side of the zone's finger. Up collective would have produced the same results. I had the strange sensation that the aircraft was flying us.



"Get 'em up, get 'em up!" I yelled, referring to the engine speed-control levers. In a split second, I wondered if my trusty copilot had let his hands slip from the throttles on final after we had specifically briefed it.

"They're up, all the way up," he called. I checked. They were.

"Where is all that power we're supposed to have?" I asked myself. We were danger-

ously low now, descending and maintaining forward motion past the tiny LZ. I feared for the tail pylon and tail rotor as I continued adjusting the nose over from our decelerating approach attitude.

We cleared the forward edge of the zone in a modified bunting maneuver, still drooping and descending into the canyon. Thank goodness for that canyon. At least I could now lower the collective and get some of our Nr back.

"No. 1 crapped out," I said to my copilot. "TGT is way up. No Ng or Nf. Compressor stall. No kidding. Nice explosion, too." Collective coming down, nose coming over, *ground coming up.*

"Come on, baby, don't do this," I muttered over the ICS.

"Our tail is clear, sir," the crew chief offered. "What the hell is going on?"

"Stand by, bubba," I replied.

"Are we going in?" he asked.

"Stand by. Lock your harness."

"Your Nr is way low," my copilot warned. "We're going through 90 percent."

"I know, man, collective is coming down. We're too low. Any lower and we'll be in the sagebrush."

"No. 1 TGT is way up. Do you want to shut it down?" my copilot persisted.

"Screw it!" I answered. "Bring 'em both up."

"They have been," he reminded me. "Nr is very low, about 85 percent."

The canyon provided a reasonable descent path but with every reduction in collective to recover lost Nr, the old H-53 got closer to the deck. We were blowing dirt and vegetation around in a distorted downslope air taxi.

"We gotta get some airspeed here," we said in unison.

"When is it going to happen?" I said.

"Here we go, here we go. It's coming up." The earth slowly began to slip away.



"Sir, are we going to clear those power lines down the canyon?" my crew chief asked.

"I'm not sure yet. We may have to go under them." I called on the radio, "LZ site traffic, any aircraft working LZ Large, please vacate. H-53 inbound with an engine failure."

"OK, good speed. Pull the fuel on No. 1," I told my copilot. "Shut it down."

"Roger, one. No. 1 is coming off. Landing checklist?" he prompted.

"Sir, those power lines?" My crew chief was getting nervous.

"Yeah, we should be OK. Sit tight."

We cleared the power lines by 75 feet at 90 knots. Our Nr had returned to an acceptable 98 percent and was coming back up

as we set up for our approach to the LZ.

We had been airborne for 0.8 hours. We had launched with a full load of gas and still had a lot left when the engine went crazy. We were heavy. As we landed, we drooped to 94 percent in the No. 2 engine, the *weak* one. The No. 1 engine was FODed. A passing H-46 transmitted our plight to our ready room, and we were on our way home in another aircraft within the hour.

I shudder to think what would have happened if we had not had such a thorough brief, or if my copilot had not responded as briefed. We were heavy, in a critical flight transition, and drooping like a big dog. ◀

LCdr. Service is a former Marine CH-53A/D pilot. He has also served as VT-27's NATOPS Officer. He is currently assigned as the Safety Officer for HSL-45.

Goods Winds, *Bad Winds*



6

By LCdr. John T. Bader

"612, hot-pump aboard 7VT at 2230."

OK, no problem. We've been out for 2.5 hours with another hour to go until our hot-pump time. We still have 2,000 pounds of fuel. A quick drink from the smallboy and we'll be set until our 2400 cycle

time. After refueling, we spent the next hour making random sonar dips ahead of the CV and arrived over the FFG a few minutes early. This frigate was a "stretch" FFG with a nice, big deck designed for straight-in approaches that are more comfortable for the copilot.

"612, this is 7VT tower. Numbers to follow. BRC, 240. Speed, 24. Altimeter, 29.98. True wind, 060 at 19. Relative wind down the deck at 5, pitch 1, roll 1. Stand by for green deck."

Let's think about this situation for a second. If we had accom-

approach/march 1990



plished nothing else in our many sonar dips this evening, we had definitely determined that the true wind was, indeed, 060 at about 20 knots. Although the relative wind which the ship gave us was within our prescribed envelope, I didn't need a degree in calculus to figure this approach would be downwind. Combined with a high density altitude (1,800 feet), a downwind approach would drastically reduce our waveoff capability.

I could see the MIR now, maybe even a "there-I-was" story in Approach. The story's teaser line could read, "What was I thinking of, making a downwind approach to a smallboy at night in my old, underpowered H-3? I didn't even ask the ship to maneuver for more favorable winds."

Fortunately, my HAC was our squadron skipper and he wasted no time in not accepting those winds. He asked for true winds down the deck, not the relative wind. The tower operator was now in an uncomfortable position. The bridge had set a course which put the wind within limits but the aircraft commander wanted something else.

Predictably, my CO talked to the ship's CO, who had been in command for only two months. He was still somewhat unfamiliar with helicopter aviation, but he proved

to be a quick learner. My skipper suggested that both COs would be held accountable if anything happened during the approach or departure. The ship turned to 060, we got our fuel and returned to our carrier safely.

Do you want the ships in your battle group to get into the habit of steaming for winds when there's lots of true wind available in another direction? Do you want your aircraft commanders to accept any winds just because they're within the envelope? Our carrier was restricted to its operating area, but the frigate was free to maneuver. The FFG's OOD chose the easiest and fastest way to get the wind within limits: he maintained course to parallel that of the CV, which

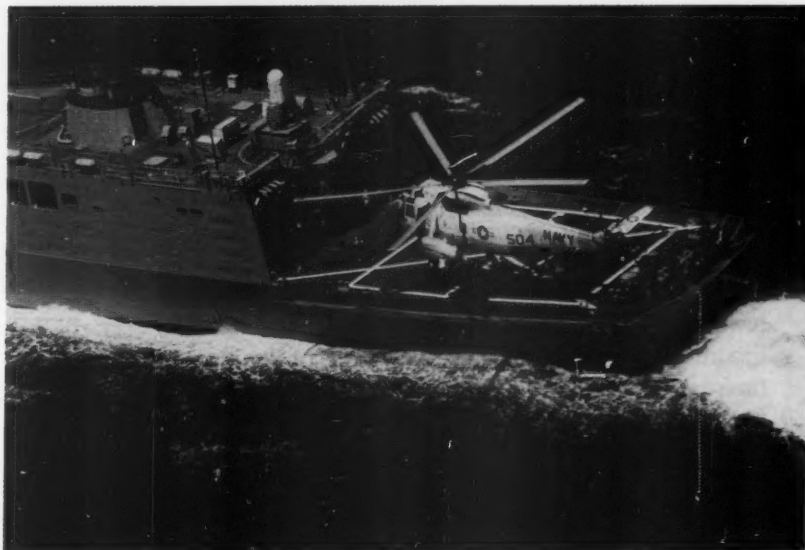
was naturally downwind since she was between cycles, and accelerated. He should have turned to use the wind that nature provided.

There was no reason for my skipper to accept the original winds when it was possible to get something more favorable. Of course, the smallboys are often constrained in their maneuvering and may not be able to give you what you want. But, frankly, dealing with those situations is one of the reasons we get flight pay.

Would our most junior HAC have been able to make this downwind approach? Certainly. Would he have been able to handle an engine failure on short final or departure? I'm not so sure. Perhaps experience would have made the difference between a successful waveoff and a single-engine waterlanding at night—which is right up there with root canal work on my list of favorite activities.

Downwind landings and takeoffs are not routine and even though there was a slight amount of relative wind—only five knots—in this instance, a turn in either direction to wave off this up-the-stern approach would have reduced even that amount of wind. LCdr. Bader is the Admin Officer for HS-15.

7



When the Giant Fan Stops, or Spasmodic Shudders at 10,000 Feet

By Lt. M.K. Tribbie

THE rainy season at NAS Westpac was sunny, hot and steamy. Thunderheads towered in the distance, daring us to get into the sky. We were on our way to the far north, where real men eat kimchi and the exchange rate lets you bring home riches from faraway lands.

We wanted to make the trip in our two Super Stallions in two eight-hour legs. We planned to conduct in-flight refueling with a Marine squadron's KC-130s. Each crew included a couple of copilots, so that all of us H2Ps could get our share of flight time.

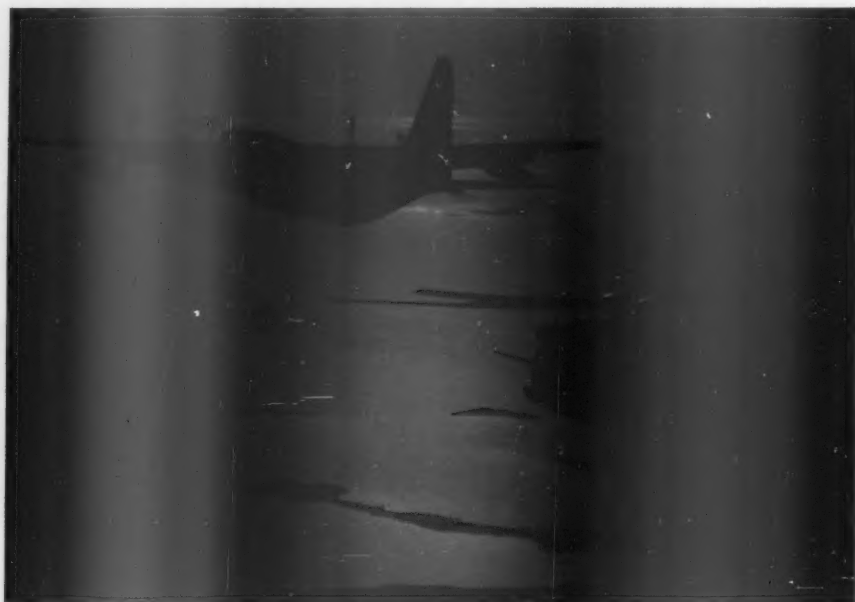
Soon we were blasting north at 6,000 feet, thumbing our noses at the big puffy clouds around us. Most of the non-flying crew was enjoying a long siesta in the cargo section of the Super Stallion. We were lulled to sleep by the low-pitched, metronomic drone of the main transmission. With 20,000-plus pounds of remote detach-
8 ment gear crammed in the back, we found it easy to make racks.

I groggily glanced outside and noticed that clouds were enveloping us. The engine's whine increased, telling me that we were climbing to get out of the clag. It was almost time for our first stop at the airborne gas station.

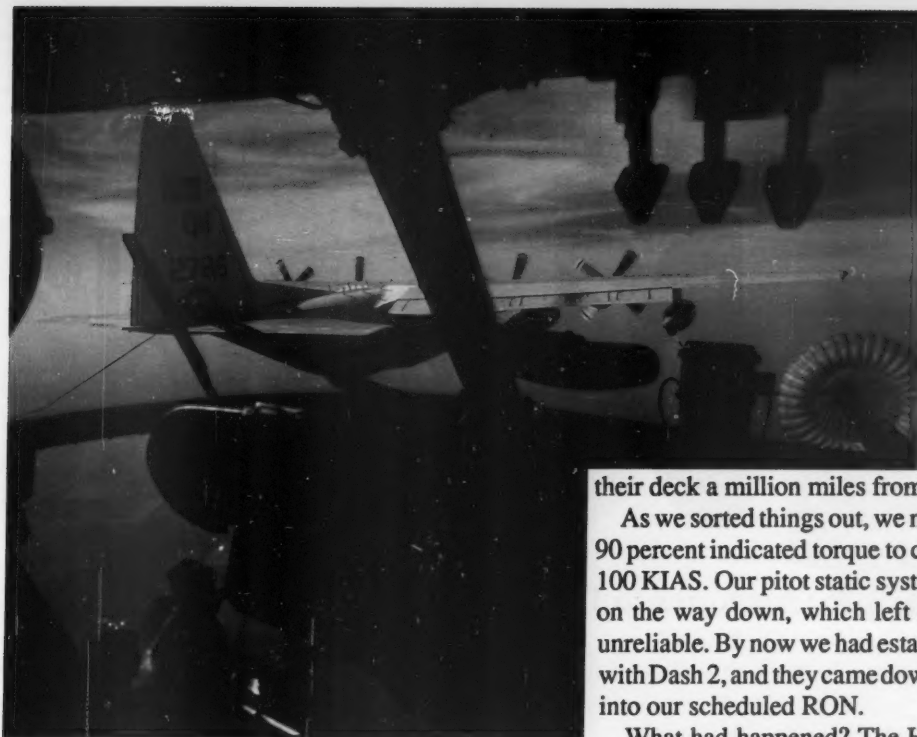
We were now VFR on top, and it was refreshing to see blue skies again. The aircrewmembers hustled to perform last-minute security checks before we started tanking. I noticed that it was

hard to get a good, deep breath. Maybe my vest was too tight, I thought, or maybe we were up where the air was a little thin. Over ICS, one of the aircrewmembers told me we were "up a little high" because the tanker's weather radar indicated solid clouds from 10,500 feet all the way down to the deck. If we wanted fuel, then it would be up here and not at the wave tops.

We tanked, and it was my turn to get a couple of hours in the left seat. I managed to settle in without kicking the stick. While adjusting the straps, I felt the aircraft begin to shudder spasmodically. It sounded



Capt. Richard Mullen, USMC



Capt. Richard Mullen, USMC

like some massive piece of rotating machinery was being forced to slow down against its will.

I was frozen, looking out of the windscreen counting the rotor blades and trying to figure out the cause of the cacophony. Suddenly a hand thrust into the cockpit and a finger desperately pointed at the instrument panel. My eyeballs bounced off my visor and back into my head as I noticed the Nr somewhere below 90 percent and falling. The three engine torque stripes bounced against the gauge top margins. The attitude gyro indicated a 90-degree left bank.

The giant fan was coming to parade rest!

I yelled, "Unusual attitude!" over the ICS. Dash 2 casually passed beneath us from port to starboard, oblivious to our predicament.

Mechanically, I lowered the collective and aimed the aircraft down. The HAC came on the controls and began some radio chatter with Dash 2. The altimeter looked like one of those movie clocks gone crazy in reverse while the VSI was straining to point straighter than straight down. At 1,000 feet I still couldn't see water. Still frantically looking, we went through 900 feet, 800 feet. . . Finally I saw the waves, and we leveled out around 500 feet above the water. A lone freighter crashed through the white water below us, making her way south to friendlier seas. I'm sure they were surprised to see us drop from the clouds and zoom right over

their deck a million miles from nowhere.

As we sorted things out, we noticed that it took about 90 percent indicated torque to carry us along at a paltry 100 KIAS. Our pitot static system had probably frozen on the way down, which left our airspeed indicators unreliable. By now we had established communication with Dash 2, and they came down to join us for the drive into our scheduled RON.

What had happened? The HAC had slowly grown hypoxic because of the altitude at which we were tanking. His condition may have been worsened by stress. During the copilot switch the aircraft had gone into a gentle, unnoticed 90-degree angle of bank while the AFCS system was on ALTHOLD. The three mighty T-64s had topped out in an effort to keep us airborne on our side, which caused the rotor system to droop. All this was happening at 120 KIAS. When you plug in our gross weight (more than 60,000 pounds) and plot our density altitude (somewhere above 10,000 feet) on the CH-53E blade-stall chart, guess what? Blade stall. And to make matters worse, the controls aren't as effective at that altitude.

We did (more or less) what NATOPS says to do for blade stall: We reduced the severity of the maneuver; reduced collective, airspeed and altitude; and increased operating rpm. We stayed out of the drink. However, if we had done what OPNAV 3710.7M says to do to prevent hypoxia, and if we had been more alert to its effects, we could have avoided the whole adventure.

Shortly before writing this article, I heard that the blade-stall chart was slated for removal from the CH-53E NATOPS manual. Paper work reduction is fine, but I recommend making a copy of the existing chart, doing some NATOPS training on the subject, and filing it for future reference. ◀

Lt. Tribbie is stationed aboard USS Tarawa (LHA-1).



Dome de

(Apologies to Dragnet)

By Ltjg. Joseph S. Palermo

OUR crew had two nuggets, myself and an airman, who were fresh out of the FRS. On the way out to the operating area, our HAC gave us a simulated emergency.

"We're losing a lot of oil back here, sir," the first crewman called. "It looks like a massive leak in the transmission."

No problem. Just fly like we briefed. The flying pilot continues flying; I'd done it hundreds of times in the training command. I called for landing checks and set up for a controlled approach to the nearest field. But, as I found out in the next few days, a simulated emergency is not like the real thing.

This time, we were on a test hop. It was our second dip, and cable angle hover didn't work, which left me with a swinging dome for the rest of the flight.

"No echoes, sir," the first crewman advised.

"Stand by to raise the dome," I replied.

"Cable within limits."



approach/march 1990



Dome Dome!

"Up dome," I called.

"Roger, sir, up. . . Oh, no! There's oil everywhere. It's really pouring out, sir!"

"Roger, continue to raise the dome."

But the crewman replied, "Cable is out of limits now, sir." I had let the excitement take my attention away from flying.

"Remember the brief," I said to myself, "get on the gauges."

"The gauges look good," my copilot said, "No fluctuation."

"Stand by to raise the dome," I said again.

"Cable within limits."

"Up dome," I repeated.

"Roger, up dome, depth 150 feet . . . dome clear."

"Breaking dip," I said.

My copilot made the emergency call. "Mayday, mayday. Dusty Dog 610 has a transmission oil leak. We are declaring an emergency."

"Roger, Dusty 610," the range control officer replied, "nearest landing site bears 340 degrees at two miles."

"Two miles," I muttered to myself, "Where is that landing site we always have when we simulate these things?"

By this time, our wingman had joined

on us. With oil pouring out and our landing checks complete, the HAC took over and flew a perfect no-hover landing into a confined area. We shut down and started the cleanup. There was oil everywhere.

I was not as calm as I thought I would be in a real emergency. The training we had conducted earlier that week helped us, and we also learned that with an inexperienced crew, it is important to brief more thoroughly. Of course, we were lucky having chosen the same emergency to simulate that we had later. But the more you train, the less of a factor luck becomes. ◀

Ltjg. Palermo is HS-7's Ground Safety Officer.

11



A Det OINC's



Nightmare

By LCdr. A. Russ MacConnell

I was airborne as Dash 1 on a night Anti-Ship Surveillance and Targeting mission in the Med. Maintenance had just completed Dash 2's phase inspection and needed to re-hang the Seahawk's main rotor blades. They planned on bringing out the SH-60, re-hanging the blades, folding them and restoring the aircraft.

Normally, the squadron doesn't use this procedure because the FFG-7-class of ship can only recover one helo at a time. Bringing Dash 2 out clobbered the deck. However, a Spruance-class DD was within range and had been designated as the divert deck. Maintenance thought they had plenty of time to conduct the work on Dash 2.

Of course, things didn't go as planned and Dash 2 required more time and attention. The aircraft's blade-fold system was acting up and it was "palm-tree'd" on the flight deck. As our gas gauges got lower, we thought it prudent to go to our divert deck for a drink. But our ship told us the DD was in the middle of a damage control drill and we could expect a long delay for a ready deck.

My young copilot looked at me and astutely remarked, "I

sense an unhealthy chain of events developing here." I kicked myself for getting into this situation. I should have known better. We started to review our options.

We could go to our secondary divert, a carrier that was 80 nm away, barely within range. But it was conducting flex-deck ops and had enough problems. We could conduct HIFR on our own ship, but that didn't seem like a good idea at night, with our second helo on deck. We could remove Dash 2's blades and put her back in the hangar. That would waste the maintenance effort that put us in this predicament in the first place.

We could stuff the SH-60 into the barn with her blades spread. That was too expensive and required too much paperwork. FOD would also probably do too much damage to our aircraft when we landed. We could land on the DD without lights and without flight quarters being set, the best option. But it was a dark night, and the deck was pitching and rolling. No nav aids were working, either. Besides, the ship's skipper might get upset.

Of course, we could ditch when our fuel ran out and wait for the motor whaleboat. Definitely not a good choice. The Seahawk

does not ditch as gracefully as an H-3. As a former H-3 pilot, I knew about such things. Then there would be the paperwork, more than required for the option of stuffing Dash 2 into the hangar with its blades spread.

Fortunately, we did not have to consider any of these solutions. Our ship's CO told the skipper of the DD about our situation, and the ship immediately stopped the drill and set flight quarters. We got a green deck, with the nav aids up, within 15 minutes of our ship's first call. We landed just as our low-fuel lights came on. We refueled and continued with our mission. Our maintenance troops fixed Dash 2's blade-fold system, stuffed her and we conducted a hot-pump and crew swap in Dash 1 at sunrise.

Cross-deck training from our det to the DD provided a good understanding of our capabilities and requirements. The DESRON standing order for "all aviation capable ships to be ready to provide a green deck within 15 minutes" proved itself when needed. The DD had a highly-trained flight deck crew that responded on short notice. The CO-to-CO communication broke the link in the chain which could have resulted in a mishap. ◀

LCdr. MacConnell is the OINC for HSL-44's Det 6 in USS *McInerney* (FFG-8).

The Best Pilot

in the Squadron

By LCdr. Lawrence Downs, Jr

AS the commanding officer continued the eulogy, I reflected on his statement and stared at the flag-draped casket in front of the altar. That mahogany box contained all that was left of him — precious little at that since the mishap site was a smoking hole in the side of a local mountain. He missed clearing a ridge by only 10 feet.

The mishap board thought it was his fault, but I couldn't buy that. Pilots of his caliber just don't fly into mountains. There had to be something else, an engine failure or loss of a tail rotor drive. I was sure that he

had wrestled with the aircraft every inch of the way trying to get it airborne and save his crew. If he couldn't save the helo, no one could.

He thrived on challenge. He did things I could only dream about. We both flew formation, but he could fly it tighter. When flying low-level, he flew lower. He flew longer crew days and took off in weather that kept me on the ground. His briefs and debriefs were that — brief.

"Nobody ever learned about flying from talking about it," he said. He didn't believe in preflights, except on NATOPS checks.

"This aircraft has had its daily, right?" he asked me once. "If it flew in, it'll fly out." When he ordered beer, I felt like I should be drinking warm milk from a saucer.

The XO was speaking now, recounting the time six months ago when the late pilot received the Navy Commendation Medal for serving as OINC during a short-notice surge operation. He won all the accolades when he managed to target the high-value unit of the Red Forces without being detected. It was a black, moonless, IFR night, and he closed to within two miles for a VID by flying at 40 feet and 120 knots. I had flown earlier that night, but I wouldn't trust myself or the autopilot below 125 feet. It was all I could do to relax my death grip on the cyclic. But then, I wasn't him.

"Heck," I remember him saying later, "I could have gone 10 feet lower, but I thought my copilot would have a heart attack."

I also knew he had flown over 50 hours during that five-day period, and once, he had launched on an eight-hour mission without having slept in the previous 30 hours. But everyone knew he could handle it. When he wasn't flying, he was in CIC directing the action, making sure everything was going flawlessly. He was that type of guy: He liked to manage everything. That's why he was always considered for difficult tasks, and why he always got the medals.

The NATOPS Officer, directly in front of me, shifted uncomfortably. I knew what he was thinking. Nobody gave tougher NATOPS checks than





"He was an expert in every mission area. He knew everything there was to know about his aircraft and could fly it better than anyone I know. He was undoubtedly the best pilot in the squadron."

this guy. He liked to pull the PCL back to idle while the other pilot was in a hooded doppler hover. He told me he had to turn the ICS off before giving that emergency so he couldn't be heard laughing at the other pilot's surprised expression. The main-mounts got wet a couple of times, but no big deal. But, maybe, we should have seen that one coming.

No one was going to miss him more than our Maintenance Officer. He had a reputation for getting the bird up, no matter what. If the numbers were close, the plane was up.

"It's all in how you look at the gauges," he said. "Besides, some engineer has added a fudge factor." Many times, he completed a functional check flight well after official sunset.

"It's not *really* nighttime while it's still pink," he claimed. He was sure the Skipper would give him the 3710 waiver if he asked for it. It's not that

he broke any rules. He just "bent" them a little.

Then there was the Air Medal. He launched in zero-zero weather – he had a special instrument card – to rescue an A-7 pilot who had ejected 15 miles off the coast. As it turned out, a Coast Guard cutter got there first and made the rescue. However, his basic flight instruments went "tango uniform" and the airmanship he demonstrated in getting back earned him the Air Medal. He later confided to me that in the rush to launch, he skipped the checklists and would have probably caught the problem. Checklists were for people like me. He didn't need them.

I glanced at his wife in the front row. She stoically listened to the service. Her red, puffy eyes gave her away, though. I guessed she had had very little sleep this last week. His little boy and girl sat beside her, neither seeming to grasp the fact that

they would never see their father again.

In the end, it was a day VFR hop that got him. He always flew a little too low and a little too fast in the valleys up in the mountains. He was "training" for his upcoming deployment to a hot area overseas. Never mind that nap-of-the-earth was not our mission.

"When the balloon goes up," he said, "your mission is whatever they tell you it is. You've got to be ready for anything." Power required exceeded power available, the most basic of truths. He had pushed the envelope a little too far this time and didn't make it. He made a nugget's mistake. Him, the best pilot in the squadron.

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," the chaplain said, "From dust we came and to dust we shall return..."

Could I have prevented this? Could anyone? All the signs were there. What could we have done?

It occurred to me that the comment by the Skipper was all wrong. The deceased was *not* the best pilot in the squadron. The best pilot is the one who knows his limitations and doesn't push them. The best pilot understands that the rules – NA-TOPS, 3710, SOP – are for everybody, not just the other guy. The best pilot in the squadron is the one who *adds* that little margin of safety instead of taking it away. The *best* pilot in the squadron is the one who is still with us. ▶

LCDR. Downs is the Safety Officer for HSL-47.

A Matter of



"It's all a matter of trust," my instructor pilot said. "Take that plane over there, for instance."

I glanced at a slowly growing, barely perceptible dot on my windscreen. We seemed to be closing on a light civilian aircraft.

"C-B-D-R," he said. "Constant bearing, decreasing range – the recipe for disaster."

I checked the instruments. We were on course, on altitude, on an IFR flight plan in radar contact. The other aircraft was plainly visible, obviously a

Trust

By Ltjg. Royce Dreyer



Cessna. I was pretty sure he had us in sight.

I felt the cyclic move a tiny bit to guide our helicopter behind the small plane. Hey, we were where

we were supposed to be.

"Don't trust him," my instructor said. "He probably assumed you were going to move. If you both think the other is going to take action, and neither of you does, that's when problems occur."

We passed him with plenty of room. Thirty seconds later, the controller called out conflicting traffic.

"Don't rely on *him*, either. You have no idea how

busy he is or what he is looking at. He may have 10 other aircraft on another frequency."

I thought about this lesson as we finished our hop by doing approaches to an LZ at a nearby field. After several landings, we headed back home.

"Just one more thing," my IP said. "Watch this."

He turned the helicopter sharply and increased airspeed. I tried to figure out what he had in mind. The airspeed and rate of descent steadily increased. The tree-lined pad came into view. As we got closer, I wondered how he could possibly stop the helo in that 60-foot square area. Must be one of those "combat" instructor demos. Wow! Hot!

Now the trees were close and a blur below the chin bubble. "No way," I thought. "How can he stop?"

"Twelve-hundred feet rate of descent," he said. Hint, hint.

No answer. I braced for impact.

At the last minute, he leveled off and glided a few feet over the pines before turning for home.

"So, what did you think?" he asked.

I tried to collect my thoughts. "Well, it did seem a bit fast."

"A bit?"

"OK," I admitted, "way too fast."

"Was it a dangerous approach?"

"Yes, I guess so."

He pressed the matter. "If we had continued the approach, do you think I could have landed safely?"

"No. At least I couldn't have."

"Then, why didn't you do something about it? I could have had vertigo, or spazzed out, or something. Are you going to let me kill you? Do you *trust* me?"

I kept silent. The IP continued.

"Don't let anyone kill you. Be ready to get on the controls at any time if you can't talk someone out of a dangerous situation. Don't let anyone go beyond what *you* can handle. Don't trust me. Don't trust *anyone*."

That was not the last time someone has tried to kill me. I've always developed game plans to cover different situations. Simple, yet timely responses have often helped me avoid trouble later. Over time I've learned a good pilot isn't paranoid; he just doesn't trust anyone.

Ltjg. Dreyer is an H-60 pilot with HSL-47.

approach/march

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Preflight

By Lt. W. Michael Tooker

Even with only 700 hours, I've walked around helicopter rotors nearly 300 times. I've inspected thousands of safety-wired bolts, lube lines, cannon plugs, wire bundles, and sight gauges—enough hardware to make me an expert in spotting the little things. But knowing what to look for is only half the battle; always having enough time to conduct a thorough preflight can be a lost luxury under the pressure of operational flying.

When LAMPS is the only available ASW platform within a hundred miles, the pressure on the aircrew to launch quickly grows exponentially. Combine a major exercise, a helo with one green HAC and a nugget H2P fresh from the FRS, and you have the potential for a mishap.

Fleetex promised to be an exciting time for our rookie

crew. It was my first at-sea period as HAC, and my copilot's first-ever underway. And for both of us, it would be our first real tactical ASW mission. We launched 30 minutes earlier than expected so the combat brief was quickly followed by a NATOPS brief, and the familiar preflight. We divided the preflight inspection duties evenly between the two pilots. With an aircraft as compact as the SH-2F, you can do a thorough job in 15 minutes. I sent my copilot down one side and I took the other. As soon as we were strapped in, with the intakes removed and the cowlings closed, we started the engines and engaged the rotors.

Everything went great—at first. We were the only available helo, and for once, the P-3s wouldn't be seeding the ocean with sonobuoys. For this exercise period, we were

...Again

the sole air asset protecting the entire flank of a dual-carrier battle group against multiple submarine attacks. Within 30 minutes we had scored our first simulated kill on a sub that had spent too much time admiring its work.

Forty-five minutes later, with our first victory 25 nm behind us, we found ourselves loitering a few miles from home plate. Suddenly my radar operator spotted a blip—another sub looking for target practice. It was too easy. We made a classic radar run-in, followed by buoy drops and a hot contact. Moments later, we scored our second kill. We were just coming around to reattack when the bubble burst: my copilot told me that one of our engine cowlings had come open.

Open cowlings in flight are not fun. We had 10 square

feet of metal swinging up and out, doing its best to hit our main rotor system. Blade flaps—unique to the SH-2F—are small airfoils moved by 1/4-inch control rods. These rods are completely exposed for the first three feet of the main rotor blade. If you lose one of these flaps or control rods, you'll probably enter uncontrolled flight.

If the cowling leaves the aircraft and manages to miss the main rotors, debris can hit the tail rotor. Losing tail-rotor thrust is not a good thing either, and usually means an unpowered autorotation to a ditching. I strained to see out of my copilot's mirror. A thin, 18-inch spring, never designed to withstand the pressures of jet exhaust and rotor wash, was valiantly holding back calamity.

Seconds after the initial shock of an in-flight





emergency, we went back to basics. We followed NATOPS procedures, pulled out the checklist, called for emergency flight quarters, and turned for home. Five minutes later, after some initial overcontrolling, we were safely back on deck, a pair of scared and embarrassed young aviators. Other than our pride and our egos, the only damage was a badly burned cowling.

What went wrong? There are three latches on that particular cowling. Two close flush against the cowling surface; one acts as a simple safety tab. The cowling had

been closed and the latches shut, but the locking mechanisms of the two main latches missed their mark. The safety tab kept things in place, only to come loose in flight. Six sets of eyes passed within two feet of the cowling during flight quarters, yet neither the helo's aircrew or the ground crew saw that the cowling was ajar. As aircraft commander, I was responsible for ensuring a complete preflight. In our haste to launch, we allowed the mission—an exercise—to rush us through what should have been a careful procedure.

I have changed my habit

patterns to include a final once-over of the aircraft. The ground crew also gives more care to checking the cowlings and other crucial items. The definition of operational necessity has forever been rewritten in my mind. Never let perceived operational pressure or your own eagerness rush you through proper preparation for a safe flight.

The H-2 has had numerous problems with cowlings opening in flight, some resulting in Class A mishaps. Additional safety latches have been added but if these are not secured properly, they won't help.—Ed. ◀

Lt. Tooker is a LAMPS pilot with HSL-32. He is Det 7's Maintenance Officer.

The "Brakes" of Naval Air

By LCdr. Brian J. McCormack



AFTER several years of graduate school and staff duty, I was finally back in the cockpit in a fleet squadron — the only place to be. I finished the typical CAT II training syllabus at the FRS. After checking in when the ship pulled in on a Sunday, I found myself back at sea the next day.

I had the best flight of the day: a seven-hour ASW marathon on the range off San Diego. Because of the length of the hop, I was in the right seat as one of two copilots, with our spare pilot riding in the back until we switched midway through the flight.

I was a little rusty after my long lay-off. It was, after all, only my second flight with the squadron. But I soon felt comfortable and looked forward to a good training period with our S-3 counterparts against a U.S. nuke.

We landed at NAF San Clemente to install the necessary range equipment and top off our fuel. After the instrument package was installed, we taxied toward the fuel pits. Ground control asked us to expedite our taxi on the parallel taxiway.

After a 45-degree turn to enter the pits, I lowered the

collective slightly and beeped the cyclic forward to control taxi speed and to keep the tip-path plane in the proper position. As I steadied up on our heading, the helicopter suddenly began to pitch forward. I didn't know what the problem was, but it felt as though I was going head-over-heels. The H-3 rocked forward, and I pulled collective to get airborne and keep a load on the rotor head to prevent the blades from striking the tail pylon and drive shaft.

The fueling crew scrambled out of the pits as I wrestled the Sea King into a somewhat stable hover, caught my breath, and listened to the ICS for any particular comments from the crew. We could all smell something burning, but a quick check confirmed no fire and two good landing gear.

The HAC took the aircraft so I could double-check the starboard gear down and locked, and he landed smoothly on the taxiway. A more thorough security check revealed a broken forward anti-collision light, and we later determined that the starboard brake

had locked up, causing the uncommanded pitch forward. We decided we could start the first half of our mission without topping off, and we air-taxed for takeoff.

Back in the ready room after the flight, I thought about the incident on the island. NATOPS warns about locked or binding brakes. However, I have never discussed a locked-brake scenario in detail. There was no time to analyze the situation; we could only react. Our brief had emphasized safe procedures while taxiing and watching for line-men. But, in this case, we had to react to something inside the helicopter. Our crew coordination had been good and helped us to recover safely. We had several "brakes" in our favor, including an experienced HAC and crew, plenty of room to get airborne when the brakes locked, and a safe place to land after we were able to consider our situation.

LCdr. McCormack is the Admin Officer for HS-4.

21



Lt. Joe Ebert
Lt. William Clark
AW2 Michael Rouse
VX-1

22

Lt. Ebert (PIC) and his crew recovered at NAS Patuxent River following a routine training mission. Their SH-3H touched down next to the washrack, and they taxied back to their line. The taxiway crossed a road intersection. Lt. Clark asked ground control to turn on the warning lights and horn.

As the Sea King continued taxiing, the crew kept a lookout for automobile traffic. One vehicle approaching from the right did not yield, and Lt. Clark made an ASE-off jump-takeoff to avoid a collision. This maneuver caught the attention of the driver, who apparently had been talking to her passenger and was not watching the road.

The automobile passed directly under the nose of the helicopter and made no attempt to slow or stop. Once the road was clear, Lt. Clark landed the aircraft and reported the incident to ground control.

Crew coordination and situational awareness prevented a catastrophe in which the inattentive driver, her passenger and their car would have certainly come out the losers. At bases with roadways beside or crossing runways and taxiways, the potential for trouble is always present. Lights and buzzers cannot replace attention by aircraft crews and automobile drivers. — Ed.

Left to right:
Lt. Joe Ebert,
AW2 Michael Rouse,
Lt. William Clark



Capt. David O. Drake, USCG
Lt. Gilmore N. Birklund
HT-18

Capt. Drake (USCG Liaison Officer) and Lt. Birklund (IP) departed NAS Whiting Field in a TH-57B for a local fam hop. Lt. Birklund initiated a simulated emergency. Capt. Drake lowered the collective and maneuvered into the wind for a simulated precautionary landing. At approximately 500 feet AGL, the engine began winding down accompanied by low rotor rpm and engine flameout.

Capt. Drake lowered the collective and established autorotative profile. Lt. Birklund tried to restart the engine without success. Lt. Birklund assumed control of the aircraft and autorotated to a farmer's field.

BRAVO ZULU

Cpl. Douglas Story, USMC
Cpl. Earnest Boom, USMC
Cpl. James Winchell, USMC
Cpl. James Lewellyn, USMC
HMM-266

While returning from a D-Day assault exercise during Teamwork-88 in northern Norway, two CH-46E crews from USS *Inchon* (LPH-12) saw an explosion and smoke coming from a highway. The aircraft immediately investigated and found the wreckage of a Norwegian semitractor trailer that had flipped over. The two Marine helos landed near the road.

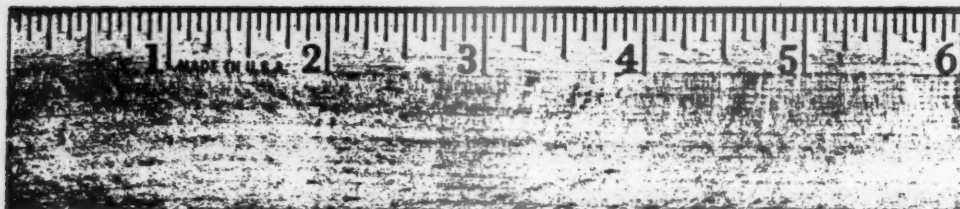
Cpls. Story, Lewellyn, Boom and Winchell each took fire extinguishers and ran more than 100 yards through deep marsh to the burning truck and pulled the driver from the vehicle. Cpl. Story and Cpl. Winchell emptied their fire extinguishers on the truck's fuel tanks while Cpl. Lewellyn and Cpl. Boom climbed into the burning cab to check for other occupants. Twice during the search, the flames drove Cpl. Lewellyn and Cpl. Boom out of the cab. The two Marines could not find any other passengers.

The fire was too large to extinguish, and the aircrewmen quickly moved the severely injured driver by stretcher to their aircraft. During the flight to a nearby hospital, Cpl. Story and Cpl. Winchell treated the driver for shock. After arriving at the hospital, they briefed the Norwegian doctors on the first aid they had administered.

These four Marines have been recommended for the Navy-Marine Corps Medal.



Left to right: Cpls. Douglas Story, Earnest Boom, James Winchell, James Lewellyn



Inches From Being Heroes

By Capt. Philip Cain, USMC

IT was a gorgeous VFR day in WESTPAC. We were at angels one, 90 knots, and 300 miles from nowhere in our "Battle Phrog." At least we'd escaped from the LHA for a couple of hours. We were scheduled for carrier controlled approaches, followed by deck landing qualifications.

We were on downwind at five miles when I noticed a 200-pound fuel split. We had launched with a 150-pound split, so I wasn't too concerned. As we turned onto base leg, I decided to balance the fuel load by crossfeeding right to left. One of our crew chiefs—we had three on board during this mission—checked the four-way valves and everything seemed normal. We turned onto final at five miles, and my copilot, who was at the controls and under the hood, saw that the No. 1 fuel gauge read zero.

I did not know what had failed, so I immediately secured the crossfeed and told a crew chief to re-check the four-way valves. About 20 seconds later, I saw a fuel boost-pump caution light flicker then remain lit. Almost immediately, the No. 1 engine flamed out.

By this time, we were at four miles, on glide path, on course, coming down on a perfect approach. I moved the No. 1 Engine Condition Lever (ECL) to stop, and my copilot



turned the Power Management System off. We secured the Engine Air Particle Separators, slowed to 70 knots and interrupted the final controller to tell him about our problem. It took three tries to break through, but we finally made it, then switched to Primary.

The crew chiefs had finally discovered the cause of the flameout. The No. 1 four-way valve was stuck in the crossfeed mode, delaying our attempt to restart that engine. We were now two miles out and set up perfectly for a straight-in approach.

With the four-way valve situation corrected, I tried to relight the engine. Nothing. But, we were still looking pretty good, plenty of power, and nothing falling off the aircraft. There was no fire, just lots of water between us and our tiny boat.

Primary cleared spot eight for us, and we seemed to have it made. We had made out load computations before takeoff, and they told us we needed to maintain 30 knots single-engine airspeed. We had favorable winds—60 degrees starboard at eight knots.

As we came to within 100 yards of the stern, we started to settle and droop rotor rpm (Nr). Both my copilot and I pulled power as we passed the Close-In Weapon System (CIWS). Our left mainmount landed on top of the aft rail (wheel stop) and bounced up, then backward, coming to rest in the netting aft of spot eight. Six inches more and we would have been heroes.

We quickly tried to shut down the No. 2 engine, but pulling the ECL back had no effect. We knew we had to shut down fast because of the hordes of flight deck personnel running toward us. I pulled the No. 2 fire T-handle and five seconds later, the engine flamed out. We applied the rotor brake at 65 percent Nr, but it wouldn't work. I cycled the switch three times before the brake caught at 40 percent Nr.

We sat there, wondering what did we do wrong. We had plenty of time to think about it as we went through four hours of writing statements, taking physicals and answering questions. For the record, the battery bus appeared to have failed, although the exact cause is unknown. We suspect that a section of the bus wore through the rubber coating and shorted to ground.

That was my first emergency as an aircraft commander and I have had four months to think about it. I learned several things. Having your own emergency makes you study your procedures more closely. A single-engine failure is a land-as-soon-as-practical emergency. It should be treated with respect, but, depending on the nature of the failure, it may allow you to take your

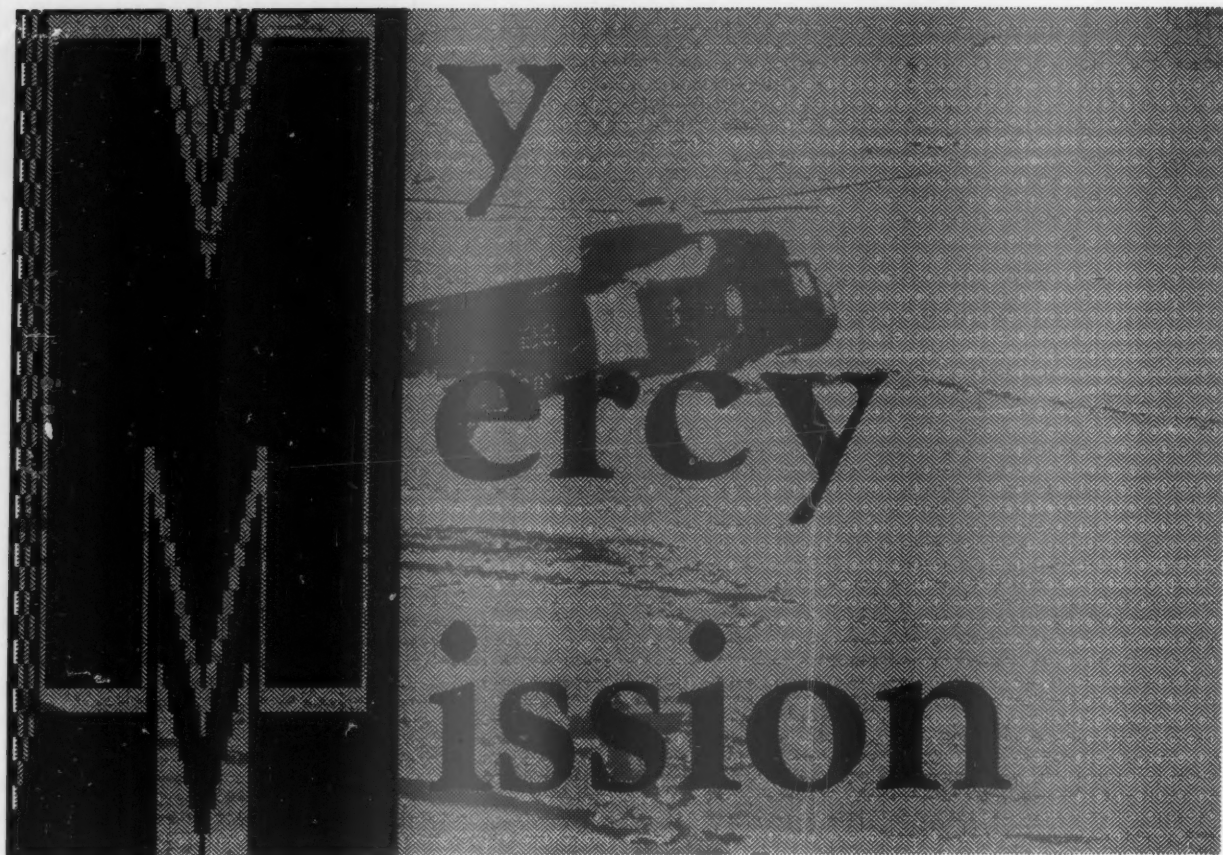
time to maximize your chance of a safe recovery. You might be able to ask for more wind directly down the deck, or for Primary to clear spots six, seven and eight for a roll-on landing. You might also be able to fly around for a while to jettison fuel, thereby reducing the power you'll need.

When your big, gray boat becomes a tiny postage stamp on that huge ocean, any emergency gets your attention in a big way. You must tell Primary exactly what you want. In some respects, that ship becomes yours to command. It's too easy to second-guess what you did during an emergency. Believe me, I've questioned myself a thousand times since my incident. ◀

Capt. Cain is a CH-46E pilot with HMM(C)-164. He has served as the squadron's Aviation Safety Officer, and is currently the QA Officer.



approach/march 1990



By LCdr. L.A. Wallis

BY the middle of my first WESTPAC cruise I was getting to be a rather salty young aviator. I had recently qualified as a Helicopter Aircraft Commander (HAC) and thought I could handle any mission.

One day, the weather was downright lousy. But the air wing needed the flight time, and we were determined to give it a try. The ship was in and out of storms; the ceilings and the visibility were up and down. The deck was moving more than I ever thought possible. The rain varied between coming down in buckets and looking like it was shooting out of a firehose.

We started flying around noon, and things were rough on deck. We worked as best we could. A young blue-shirt, in a rush to do his

job, decided to roll under a taxiing A-7. He had probably done this several times to save time, but this time the maneuver backfired. His flotation vest caught on part of the aircraft, trapping him as the Corsair's wheel rolled over his head and crushed his skull.

He was rushed down to medical. There wasn't much the docs could do except make him comfortable. He couldn't be medevaced to Cubi, and he couldn't be stabilized on board ship because of the rough seas.

Prudence prevailed at about the same time as this mishap and flight operations were secured. We set the routine alert status; it was my turn as the Alert 30 SAR. Later, the skies darkened as the already-bad weather deteriorated further.

As we sat in the ready room wondering what we would do next, the Skipper entered and asked who the Alert 30 was. He looked serious. As I stood up, he didn't seem too reassured. I was his newest HAC, and I'm sure he wasn't too confident in me. He didn't say anything, though, and told us we would launch to the beach to pick up a head harness that wasn't in the ship's inventory. The harness would stabilize the patient in medical. The Skipper said we had to get a move on because the daylight was quickly diminishing. He told me to go to Air Ops for a briefing. I told my copilot to make sure our helo was ready.

In Air Ops, the mood was sober. I wondered if I could get the job done. Subic was 150 miles away through a course paved with some of the biggest thunderstorms you'd never want to meet. I felt a little better when Ops told me radar would track us and vector us around the thunderstorms. Another carrier operating to the south could also provide flight following services and track us to Cubi. I got the frequency for the second ship and my ship's planned position on the return trip.

A flight surgeon, who knew exactly what harness was needed, would go with us. As we walked onto the flight deck, my aircraft was in a terrific downpour, a depressing sight. We briefed the crew, checked the TACAN, and launched. Shortly after takeoff, the weather improved around the ship, but it was rapidly getting dark. As we flew south, the ceilings lowered. Radar did a good job keeping us clear of thunderstorms, but the farther we got, the worse their vector accuracy seemed to get.

We finally felt as if we were being vectored toward the cells. The lightning got brighter,

and the situation was getting scary. I considered aborting, but with that crewman lying in sick bay, I decided to press on. Besides, before I took off, the Skipper asked me if I wanted to swap with someone else. He said it would be no reflection on me if I said yes.

"No way, Skipper," I said. "I can do it. No sweat." I appreciated his offer, but it was my first chance to prove myself.

Eventually, radar said they were losing us and we had to either climb or try the other carrier. We couldn't climb since we were just below a thick overcast at 100 feet. Rain was coming into the cockpit from everywhere as it usually does in the old H-3. I couldn't raise the other ship, and I'd lost my TACAN.

"Great. What do we do now?" I asked my copilot. I can't remember who came up with the idea, but we dialed in Cubi's TACAN and after a few rotations of the needle, it locked up. What a relief; Cubi was only 50 miles away to the southeast. I was smart enough to start a dead-reckoning solution on my plotting board.

"Why should we lose the TACAN?" I wondered. Then I realized it was because of the big mountain sitting just outside Cubi. The ceiling and weather were also beginning to lift – a little.

I began to worry about how dark it was ahead of us. By now, I thought we should be fairly close to the coast, but I couldn't see a single light. I had never flown into Cubi at night.

"Great. What do we do now?" I asked my copilot. I can't remember who came up with the idea, but we dialed in Cubi's TACAN and after a few rotations of the needle, it locked up.

I turned to the south thinking we were north of Cubi and soon began picking up a glow on the horizon. The glow

became individual points of light, and we realized we were over several dozen "bonca" fishing boats right off Cubi. As we came

around the mountain, the TACAN locked up. What a beautiful sight. We landed and taxied to the tower where the doc got a ride to get his harness.

We refueled while we waited for the doc. He returned quickly and we prepared to go. We weren't anxious to go back into the storms, but we knew the guy on the ship needed that harness.

Fortunately, the return trip wasn't as bad as the first leg, at least not until we were well along. The ship had stuck to its word and

professional: I got mad. After everything we had dealt with this flight, I didn't need a copilot with vertigo. I took the controls and continued inbound without further incident until we arrived at the ship.

The angle was clobbered with aircraft and our only choice was to make our approach up the port side and to slide in for landing. I asked my copilot if he was up for it, but he didn't think he was. The grand finale was a left-seat approach to a landing, not the most comfortable way under the best of condi-

28



maintained the promised PIM. The weather improved considerably; the thunderstorms had subsided, although it was still pretty dark.

Thirty miles out, however, my copilot's gyro started to precess, and he became disoriented. I'm afraid my reaction was not very

tions. It was a great feeling to get back to the ready room knowing we had accomplished our mission for someone who needed our help. Sadly, the crewman died that night. So many people had tried to help him. It's unfortunate our efforts were for naught. ◀

LCdr. Wallis was the Operations Officer for HS-15. He is currently assigned to OPNAV 607, the Navy Joint Doctrine Branch.

Brief the Crew Chief

By 1stLt. T.J. Dolan, USMC

"THANKS a lot. Good hop." How many times have you said this to your crew chief after a flight? Or, how many times after a long brief, do you only have time to make a quick preflight, jump into the cockpit and ask your crew chief, "Ready APP (auxiliary power plant)?" without briefing him on the flight?

Before every flight, the pilots get an ODO brief and maybe a tactical brief. The HAC briefs his copilot on his duties. After preflight, the crew chief is often left out and does not get a proper brief. NATOPS puts the primary

responsibility of a crew brief on the pilot's shoulders.

As each hop differs, so does the relationship between a pilot and his crew chief. Take time to properly brief your crewmen. Let them know exactly what you will be doing on the hop and what their duties are for each phase. Both pilots should attend the crew brief and should give their personal instructions clearly.

Every pilot likes his crewmen to use different techniques, and the crewmen need to know what the pilots expect from them. Some missions, like evasive maneuver-

ing (EVM), terrain flight (TERF), externals and shipboard operations, are more intense and involve the crew chief more than others.

Ask the crew chief what he needs to work and make sure he has adequate training. During the flight, involve the crew chief in what's going on, and afterward, debrief him, let him know how he did. He's more than a passenger — much more. Be specific in your debrief. "Good hop" doesn't cut it. As officers, we want more than that from our bosses. Our troops deserve nothing less.

1stLt. Dolan is the flight line officer for HMM-265.

29



This One'll Kill You! But Seriously...

By LCdr. Pat McGrath

Humorist Fran Liebowitz once said, "The opposite of talking isn't listening. The opposite of talking is waiting." There are two instances in Naval Aviation where this axiom is appropriate: There-I-was sessions at the O Club, and during aircrew briefings. In either case, it's unusual to remember what the speaker said while you are waiting to pass on your own eye-popping story.

My best brief, by all accounts, was for a group of SAR stu-

dents who were getting their qualifications. I was like a guest preacher at a tent revival. The instructor let me stand up to see if I could get the students' attention. I finished with a comment about listening to the SAR petty officer. Even my copilot listened. My job was complete. I sat down with a knowing smirk. While the SAR PO described the mundane particulars of the day's events, I looked around to assess my impact. There

was no need for me to pay attention to the brief. I'd been there before.

My big story included the basics: night, rain, no horizon, SAR jumps, cable runaway, crewman at engine intake, a jammed cable, inoperative shear, and a radalt showing zero. My crewman was clear. Power! Landing complete. Bail out water. Aircraft all right. After my big story, nothing the SAR crewman could say would teach me anything. ◀





31

I launched with this newly-converted flock on board. I'd done this so many times before; it would be a cakewalk. I prided myself on giving jumpers an honest 10-foot hover and was looking forward to their post-flight adulation for keeping the aircraft so low—not like those other pilots.

"What did you say, crewman? Jump two guys this time? Sure, go ahead." When the crewman said, "Swimmers away," I zoomed the aircraft back toward 80 feet to get away from the water. But this time, the crewman yelled, "Down, down, down!" I descended immedi-

ately.

"He fell," the crewman called. The swimmer was OK, however, and we finished the flight.

Afterward, we reviewed the video tape of the SAR jumps taken by a swimmer in the rescue boat. I was horrified. When the crewman told me he wanted to jump two men, I assumed both swimmers would go at the same time. But, instead, he wanted to drop one man, move forward, and drop the second swimmer. I would have known that if I'd been listening to his brief. The first man went out at 10 feet; the second jumped at **50 feet!**

The SAR crewman asked me if I had heard the procedure during his brief. I was embarrassed and mumbled I couldn't remember. In reality, I had been too busy waiting to give *my* story to listen to him.

Fortunately, no one was hurt on this flight. Aircrew briefs prepare crews for their mission. A little excursion down memory lane is fine, but the brief should not be diluted with entertainment. The opposite of talking isn't waiting; **it is listening.** ◀

LCdr. McGrath is the OINC for HSL-45's Det 9 in USS *Kinkaid* (DD-965).

approach/march 1990



B
I



HELOS NEVER

ON short final of our CV CCA I had time to think about our situation. I had completed my copilot duties, but it was a tedious ride in the goo. We were down to 110 feet when Paddles told us were over the rounddown. Normally, that news would have eased the tension in our ageing, but trustworthy H-3; however, things weren't normal.

We were 30 feet over the No. 1 wire, and our view from the cockpit still resembled something a bug sees at the bottom of a tall glass of milk. Suddenly, the silhouette of the bridge raced by to starboard. We had obviously come down the angle deck with an excellent lineup, but we would have had to honk the nose back so drastically to stop our relative closure rate that it would have been suicidal to try to salvage the approach. "What goes up, must come down" translates to "When the nose goes up, the tail rotor goes down" for helo pilots. The HAC, a seasoned pro, waved off without a thought, and I spent the better part of the racetrack pattern that followed begging him to bingo.

He calmly let me plead my case, trimmed the aircraft to a hands-off, ball-

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O

By Lt. Randy Johnson

out-of-center, downwind vector, and mumbled something about flying with wimps.

"Helos don't bingo!" he declared. An immortal phrase.

The carrier was five miles away in a wide fog bank. From our altitude we could see how she could have driven out of it, but we didn't insist on it. We shot our approaches with our flood-hover lights because the LSO insisted it allowed him to see us better. For us, the lights created a

bright reflection against the heavy fog and robbed us of our vital nightvision. The ship went dead in the water during our approaches. Though well intended, this action hindered us. If they were steaming into the wind, it would have slowed our closure rate, giving us more relative wind and might have driven the ship out of the fog bank completely.

We finally found spot 4. My crusty HAC sighed into his hot mike as we touched down.

The feeling that "helos never bingo" is a risky proposition and also gives a false impression to ship drivers. Helos might not bingo, but conscientious HACs do. "Never" should be a dirty word in a world of high-tempo operations.

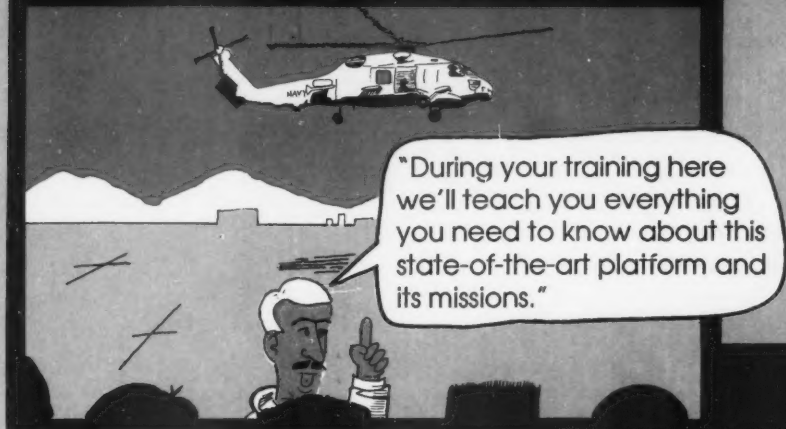
Lt. Johnson is the Schedules Officer for HS-3.

Check-in day at the RAG

BROWNSHOES IN ACTION COMIX

"The kind real aviators like"

By Lt. Ward Carroll



"In no time your instructors will have you handling this aircraft as nimbly as what you see here."



"However, safely walking back to the hangar after a long hop is something you'll have to learn on your own."

I-f you j-just head f-for the m-middle of t-the two h-hangars, y-you'll be f-fine.

G-Got it.





STRAP IT



DON'T CRACK IT!

Poster contributed by Capt. R.E. Joslin, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif.

